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THE END AND OBJECT OF EDUCATION.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE QUEBEC

YOUNG MEN'S

Protestant Educational Union,

ON 12TH JANUARY, 1857,

BY JASPER H. NICOLLS, D. D.

Principal of Bishops College, Lennoxville.

MONTREAL,

HILL & MARTIN; TORONTO, H. ROWELL; SHELBROOKE, A. WHITCHER.

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A smaller number of copies of this Lecture having been printed than was intended, it is now re-published at the suggestion of several parties who desire to see it more generally circulated.

It was written originally for, and read, two years ago, before the Library Association and Mechanics' Institute in Sherbrooke.

Bishop's College, 23rd February, 1857.

A LECTURE.

There is no subject, perhaps, on which more has been said or written—there is no subject on which more remains, or is likely, to be said or written, than that of EDUCATION. In undertaking, therefore, to read you a paper on this subject this evening, I cannot but be aware that I am approaching a task of some difficulty, and one which requires some nicety in handling. There is a danger of being very dull and uninteresting, which he must look clearly and resolutely in the face, who ventures on such well trodden ground. And on an occasion like this, the audience naturally enough look for something new; and, if the topic be a little more exciting than usual, it has the better chance of success with them.

My own views on the important subject of education have not much of this novelty to make them attractive, unless indeed their antiquatedness be a novelty; like an old grandsire's coat laid by for many years, on the chance of fashion once more returning to the admired pattern of days long since gone by.—“There is a tide”—it has been well said—“in the affairs of men.”—There is no exception to the principle—fashion rules more or less, and ever has ruled, in every department of life; the admiration of one age is an object of ridicule in the next; and what yesterday was counted folly to-day is wisdom. The greatest wonder, the most admired invention, the most useful and practical discovery, has but its own short day: in all likelihood, the greater the wonder, the more absorbing the excitement it produces, the surer its passing to neglect. Education fares no better than its neighbours in this respect. It has its phases and petted aspects from time to time, but they pass away; and subjects, which to-day are made the most of, are to-morrow slighted, if not absolutely scouted. In order to know this fully, it is only necessary to be placed for a short time in the position of a public teacher, and take a few notes of the comments which are made and the wishes which are expressed by

those who are placing out their sons for education. One wants his son fitted for life by the shortest cut that can be adopted, "Give him (says the parent,) just what will get him into this or that profession." Another begs you will not stuff his boy with Latin and Greek nonsense—"the day for that sort of thing has gone by." A third wishes his son to attain a respectable position in life, yet is perfectly contented if you can make him write a good hand, and reckon up a long column of figures with ease and correctness. A fourth does not care much what you do with the lad, if you keep him for a certain time, beyond the possibility of his annoying his fond parent, and turn him out, when he is wanted, with a pair of good broad shoulders and some little approach to good manners and sense. A fifth thinks mathematical instruction the one thing to turn to account in life—yet still his boy is thought to be a genius, and such an one as he is allowed to be, you ought certainly to turn out a polished scholar, forsooth, "in twenty-four lessons"! In short, the teacher is like the old man in the fable. He may ride his ass himself, and make his boy walk, or he may walk himself and let the boy ride, or he and the boy may ride together, or carry the ass together; but, for all that, he cannot please every body. The current of the "popularis aura"—the set of the wind of fashion, is now from the north, now from the south, presently from the east, and then from the west—with as many intermediate shades of individual fancy as there are intermediate points in the compass. Unfortunately, most of our teachers are, in their circumstances, dependent upon these popular fancies; and the history of education, (if it can be called history in so young a country as this) shews that there is yet nothing stable in this department of the work of life. There is yet nothing like solidity attained in the public judgment about it. This reflection encourages me to come forward and offer a few suggestions, and start a few questions, which may lead to thought on the subject of education, in the hope that they may here and there find some attention, and possibly approbation, and may have some slight influence—very slight it may be, yet some—in bringing about a more sober state of judgment upon the subject than that which (as I conceive) at present prevails.

The first question which presents itself to our consideration seems to be, "WHAT IS THE END AND PURPOSE OF EDUCATION?" It would, perhaps, be answered in very general terms by some, that education means the sending a boy to school. Well! certainly that is one step, and a decided and proper one to take: but we want (without being too philosophical) something further than this in the way of an account of the object of education. Let us say, first, then, that its object is to *draw out and develop the powers of the mind*. This is a view which few will question.—There are, indeed, some parents (but fortunately they are not many) who are contented to have their children kept out of harm's way, and to *say* they have been to school;—but every man of sense expects something more than this. He expects to see the growth of the mind keep pace with the growth of the body, and to receive his son home again from school or college, not merely with an active body, or a pleasing countenance, but with a strengthened intellect, ready to grasp the ideas of others promptly and vigorously, and able to strike out ideas of its own. And this is what he has a right, in ordinary cases, to expect; he has a right to expect it, wherever the germ has been implanted by nature; wherever there is capacity. But, besides this, there is a second object which all sensible parents keep prominently in view—I know not whether they will not class it in the first place. From school or college, according to circumstances (according, e.g. to the means of the parent, or the particular path marked out for the youth in life,) he expects his son to bring *not only a developed intellect, but a developed character*. What good purpose can be said to be gained by an education which has failed to give this? What is mere mental power void of all principle to direct it? The youth who is turned loose upon society, untaught to govern himself, can only be prevented from becoming a very pest to it, by his being kept too closely employed to run wild. The more influence his position gives him, the more mischievous will he be likely to become; the more intellectually cultivated he is, the more is he enabled to work harm to his neighbours, and to himself. Imagine a young man of cultivated powers of mind, with no sense of justice, little care for honesty, expediency the magnet of his life instead of the principle of inte-

grity, with, it may be, a craven heart hidden under a braggart exterior,—imagine such a youth cast loose upon the world, what good can come out of him? The most that can be hoped for him is, that his folly may be covered for a while; but all who know him must feel quite sure that in a few years he will become a public nuisance. The education, therefore, which fails to impart this principle of self-government and self-respect—*the education which fails to form character*—must certainly be deficient. How much it is acknowledged deficient even by themselves, those who profess to undervalue it hardly know. The proof of this assertion is found in the anxiety and care shewn by all parents and guardians of youth to ascertain the character and habits of the locality in which, and the master under whom, they intend to place the subject for education. It is, indeed, a point on which even the careless are often careful, however unconsciously sometimes to themselves.

In preparation then for life, i. e. in education, the formation of character, or, in other words, MORAL TRAINING, is of primary importance. Without it, education wants its brightest ornament. I would go a step further, and say that education to be effectual, *must have religious training as well as moral*. If a man is likely to be made a better citizen by the formation of a sound moral character, this likelihood is enhanced a hundredfold, by the fact of his morality being enforced by, as well as drawn from, religion. Religion is the best teacher of morality. The man who has the fear of God before his eyes—who has a lively sense of the reality of a future state, in which his lot will be apportioned according to what he has been in this world, is the most likely of all men to walk warily and circumspectly—to follow that one golden rule upon which the welfare of society depends, that each should “do as he would be done by.” The religious man—I do not mean the boaster in religion, or the selfish, vain, so-called religionist, but—the man whose conduct is regulated by the rule of God’s word, and in whose heart God’s law is written—he is, of all men, the one to discharge the duties of social life the most effectually. Where, if not in him, are you to look for the qualities of a good son, a good brother, a good husband, a good father, a good servant, a

good master, a trustworthy friend, an honest counsellor, an upright dealer? Where, if not in him, are you to find a high souled citizen? Have you to trust any one with your money, or your interests? where else will you find the man you require, but among those *whose powers of mind have been carefully nurtured under a system which took pains with the formation of character, which stamped that character with a firm and lasting outline, by giving to it an abiding sense of the fear of God and desire of His favor? **

I suppose, then, we may consider the question now answered—what are the objects at which education aims? They are the cultivation of the powers of the mind and the formation of virtuous character.

Religious education I have spoken of only as giving the highest security for the latter of the two, as well as the highest sanction of it. On this subject I will only add one word more; but the aspect of the time requires that it should be said. If education is a preparation for life—if this life is but a school or place of preparation for another—if the soul is immortal—if death is but a second birth into a new sphere of existence to which this life is preparatory, in which man will be exalted in powers and in character, as much beyond his present being as that is beyond the condition in which he entered on this life—then, how absurd, how wicked, how fraught with wretchedness, must be the desire to banish religion altogether from the field of education. Preparation for eternity is the interest, it is the plain and undeniable duty, I do not say of every *Christian*—but of EVERY MAN, WHO BELIEVES THERE IS A GOD, *of every man who holds himself to be of a higher order than the brutes around him* which perish, of every man who looks forward beyond the present moment, of every man who hopes for happiness himself, or cares for the happiness of his offspring. It is his duty, it is his interest, to look well to the moral and intellectual training of the being or beings to whom he

* This paragraph will be doubtless recognized by some of my readers, as built upon parts of that admirable work, Bishop Butler's Analogy; to others I may be allowed to recommend a reference to c. i. at the end, c. iii. 3, 4, c. v. 2 of p. 1., as containing much matter for thought on the topics here brought together.

has imparted existence, or who look to him for control and guidance.

I will proceed, then, to offer you a few further thoughts upon this all-important subject, in the hope of enhancing the estimate which some persons may have formed of education, and also of throwing out some hints which may be useful to those who have not thought much about it, but have taken up, just as they found them, the vague popular notions which are afloat. In pursuing this object, I will endeavour to make my remarks fall under the two heads before mentioned, of moral training and intellectual development.

The first of these I have already in some measure treated of. I will therefore resume the consideration and dispose of it at once, promising to be as brief as the subject permits of my being.

The necessity of moral training would be suggested to a reflecting mind by the circumstances in which we are all placed. (1) *It is natural to us*—i. e., it is in harmony with that uniform system which God has established for the government of the world, which system or law we call 'nature.' NATURE, THEN, OR GOD'S VOICE SPEAKING THROUGH THE ORDER AND SYSTEM WHICH HE HAS ESTABLISHED, requires that we should seek in education to form the character, as well as improve the powers of the intellect. The voice of nature declares for it directly, by the fact that we choose, that we value, that we reward, that we love good men for their own sake; that we abhor and punish vice because it is vice, quite independently of the consideration of the effects which it produces, its advantages or disadvantages to society. Now goodness is formed like any other quality of the mind or heart, by habit and practice—we need "schooling" for it and into it. (2) It is further worth while to observe how nature has prepared us for this formation of character, and the obligation to us thence arising to attend to this point, I might almost say above all others, in education. The ardent pursuit of desired objects by young persons, and the chill indifference of old age to the same objects, are so well known as to be found proverbially in the mouth of all persons. What is the account of this phenomenon? *Why* is it so? NATURE [i. e., let me repeat once

more, THE FIXED LAW OF GOD,] has so ordered that we act according to age and circumstances, from different springs of motion—sometimes we are led by reason, sometimes by interest; but principally, in youth especially, by passion or desire. We have within us a set of feelings and emotions—anger, love, hatred, jealousy, pity, fear, and others; and we find ourselves placed in a condition where external circumstances present themselves to these feelings as inducements and incentives to action. In young persons these feelings or propensities are very strong—so strong as to be often called irresistible: in old age they wear out, and in the uneducated subject, a mean, low, selfish calculation of interest takes the place of these often generous, but always active, and sometimes impetuous, feelings and propensities. Now we observe of these feelings that there are two classes which have respectively a tendency towards good and evil, virtue and vice. They are therefore so far opposed to each other; but in this point they are alike, that *as the character is developed they become weaker; and HABIT takes the place of FEELING.* A man's anger or his pride will increase with his years, if he give way to them; but if we mark it well, it is not the *feeling* which increases, but the habit or *character* which is formed. The passionate man gives way to his intemperate emotions on much less provocation as his habit increases. He may feel more often angry, or be made angry more easily; but it is not now *keenness of feeling* which leads him to anger. We may see the working of this theory more plainly by taking another example: sympathy, for instance, or compassion. The first field of battle which a soldier witnesses is fraught to him with horror; yet a few years of such awful experience destroys his *feeling*, and he hears the groans of the sufferer, witnesses the death even of a friend or companion, and sees blood spilt like water, with indifference. So, too, in the medical profession. Every one is aware that the surgeon acquires his needful though painful skill, only at the cost of feeling rendered less acute by a series of consecutive acts, whereby a habit of indifference is formed. Now, the object of these feelings is to set us on to a particular course of action; and if we wait till they become blunted or dulled by exposure to the chill atmosphere of life, we lose altogether the help

which they are intended, in God's wisdom, to afford us. The sight of misery will, at first, wring tears of sympathy from us, whether we will or not. If those tears move our hearts as they should do, *we advance towards the habit or character of benevolence*. If they fail to lead us to the intended action, we form a habit of indifference. *But either way the feelings lose their power*; we are moved a second, or a third, or a twentieth, or a fiftieth time, by the sight of distress, it is true, but every time we are less and less moved; twenty times the amount of suffering will not, it may be, move us as much as a single case of moderate hardship *once* did.

I must not dwell too long on this one topic, interesting and important though it be. Nor need I many words to enforce its application. If right feelings are to be used as inducements to *right action*, and wrong feelings to be guarded against, lest they lead aside to a course of vice and misery, *where*, let me ask, *are we to begin*? Is it not wrong, awfully wrong, to deny to education the right to influence and guide these feelings? It is not matter of indifference, said a philosopher of great renown, in old time, it is of importance, nay, it is of the utmost importance, "it makes all the difference," to be well trained from early youth.*

I must add one more word of wisdom, which is found in the same author—we must take care that the character which is formed be *real*.—It is easy to pass for virtuous in the world—but he is not a good man whose virtue is not from the heart. The good man must be *fond* of virtue, just as the huntsman loves to follow the hounds and chase the fox, or the sportsman delights in his dogs and his gun. I am not, of course, literally rendering to you the words of ARISTOTLE, to whom I alluded—the manners of his time were different from those of ours; and I could not use his terms exactly, without going round to explain or paraphrase; but that is the sort of illustration he uses. Then it is not an easy thing to be really a good man; and, as the journey is a long and difficult one, it is well to be up and start in good time. He who lies in bed when there is a busy day before him, is not accounted

* Arist: Eth: 2, 1.

wise; and that system which would lead us to set little value on the formation of character in education, is, I fear we must say, not a wise or good one.

It will be said, Oh, but after all, a man passes well enough through the world, without all this depth of character; he may be a little virtuous, or he may put on the appearance of virtue, which will answer every purpose of life.—So FALSTAFF thought! but the sentiment was fitted to the man: "I was as virtuously given as a gentleman need be—virtuous enough."* Very good morality for such a profligate; but very poor morality for any one except a profligate; yet see how largely such morality prevails in our own day—not cloaking, it is true, the same low and profligate debauchery, but justifying the money-seeking, fortune-hunting spirit of the age. "Virtuous as a gentleman need be" is in this view counted yet good sound sense: "Rem quocunque modo rem,"†—money, get money—somehow—anyhow; "Virtus post nummos,"†—cash first—virtue by and by; be rich, then it is time enough to think of being good; all this is too much in keeping with the temper of the age.—The age, I fear, would be found wanting, when weighed in the balance even of the philosopher, were we to lay religion, and the fact of our being here in a state of preparatory discipline for our real life, out of the question. No: education must comprehend training, and the formation of character: without this it will be worthless.—The character must be real: the false character *may answer* (if we are to descend to such ground of argument) *for a while*; but *it can seldom answer in the long run, it will never answer in the end*, when all things are to be judged before Unerring Wisdom. For the formation of this reality of character, there is a necessity in education of indulging *to the subject of it all reasonable liberty of choice and action*. There can be no reality without such liberty. You may force a young person to take a particular line, or follow a given course; but, unless you can lead him to see the necessity and importance of the course, and to *like* it, you have done little towards the formation of character or principle in him. That system, therefore, will most surely answer its purpose, (nay, it is the only one which

* K. Henry IV. Act. iii. sc. iii.

† Hor: 1, Epist. 1, 54, 66.

will answer its purpose,) which has the lines of right and wrong broadly, deeply marked, always and everywhere plainly discernable, and, at the same time, unchanging; which says: "beyond these you must not pass;" yet, within them allows, and *not only allows but encourages liberty*; and *with liberty*, what always accompanies it in successful training, *personal responsibility*. It is a very old story that "you can lead a horse to the water, but you cannot make him drink." That training which excites no thirst for virtue, fails of its design. The training which has but one stiff starched pattern, and allows no play for individuality of character or disposition, may succeed now and then, but will, on the whole, be a failure too.

I ought, perhaps, here to observe that the formation of what we call *manners*, which is certainly a point of importance, is closely connected with moral training. Indeed, in all cases, but those of marked hypocrisy, it may well be said, that manners are the outward exhibition of the inward man. "Manners makyth man,"* is a very old English motto, and one well worth remembering. Thus, a truly Christian man cannot fail of being a gentleman, in the most proper sense of the word. And he who is in heart kind and courteous, and charitable in his judgment of others, who is unwilling to give or take offence, has no taste for quarrelling, is troubled with no overweening self-esteem, must be a singular prodigy of contradiction, if his every day life, and common actions do not carry the same stamp of courteous and considerate regard for others.

I have said enough now, perhaps more than enough, upon one of the designs of education, moral training. I have been drawn into this course, by the belief, that *in this age it is necessary to insist upon this view of the subject*: and in the hope that these remarks may possibly suggest some thoughts to those whose minds the vortex of business and life, in this ever stirring, and onward-moving age, keeps too much within its own stream, to allow of such a train of thought being natural, or perhaps agreeable to them.

* The motto of William of Wykeham, founder of the College of Winchester, and New College in Oxford.

I pass on to offer you a few further observations upon *the other head of INTELLECTUAL CULTURE.*

Here, perhaps, the subject is open to the same stricture which I have just been passing upon the other part of education. However strange it may sound, I think that it is true, that education—*intellectual cultivation,—is not sufficiently valued amongst ourselves.* This assertion, however, I would not make without a certain limitation. The district school houses, scattered everywhere over the face of the country, might rise up in witness against me without this—and, indeed, if the unoccupied school houses were allowed to form into the rank, there would be a formidable phalanx arrayed against me.) The model schools would come sharply upon the heels of the district ones—and the academies and many other useful and efficient schools (private or public) would rail at me loudly : and surely I should have a storm to meet at the hands of the Superintendents and other parties officially connected with the educational department. Even our legislators—busy as they are from time to time on this subject—would come into the field, and the charge of wilful ingratitude towards them would be laid at my door. Certainly I do not covet such a powerful host of adversaries, and must therefore explain myself.

The point on which I think there is a great and general misapprehension and wrong estimate of education is, that people *seek in it nothing more than a means to an end.* *They do not value education for its own sake, they do not value education, because it develops the powers of the mind, and raises man to a higher state of being ;* but they have in seeking it some immediate object in view for the most part, and when a sufficiency of mental culture has been attained for that particular object, they are quite contented to rest there. Education must not only bring, but be demonstratively shewn to bring, in every case, and to bring immediately, its "*quid pro quo.*" Thus, there are cases where when a boy can write and cipher, and read the newspaper, everything is considered accomplished that need be done. In another, book-keeping is the *summum bonum.* In another, a little mathematics, and particularly the power of mensuration and surveying, seems to open a vast field to the youthful ambition. In a word, *though every-*

body wants to learn, almost everybody wishes to learn as little as possible. Learning is not sought for its own sake, nor does a young man think (nor a young man's father, in too many cases, lead him to suppose), that he will become *a greater and nobler being* by cultivating the powers with which God has gifted him. The railroad or the counting house is open to him at an early period, and there he finds what both his own feelings of self-importance and desire to escape from control, and also his father's indoctrination, have led him to covet, immediate independence, and the possibility, or, as he views it, the probability, of his rising speedily above mere independence. And even those whose aspirations are higher, find too often what may be called *the learned professions*, not only open their door to them as soon as they knock for admission, but *almost coax them to come in.* *While this state of things continues, we cannot become A GREAT PEOPLE.* We may be a prosperous, we may be a wealthy, but we cannot be a great people. We shall grow proud and self-complacent; we may grow luxurious and extravagant, but we shall never grow to be a great nation. Thus our railroads and other public enterprises, which seem to be clear evidence of our greatness, are in a serious and truthful point of view, things full of omen and apprehension to us. Our material prosperity is beyond our age; we are going on too fast; and when our history is written in the book of time, this fact will be recorded against us. Could the country then call back her professional men, her lawyers, her doctors, and her teachers, from the railroad, the counting house, or the gold mine, could she restore to their books and training the youths who have been so prematurely and unwisely called away into various fields of money making, she might congratulate herself. She wants now men of learning and men of character. She cries for them among the teachers of her children. She cries for them in her halls of judgment. She cries for them amongst her spiritual pastors. She cries for them in her various deliberative assemblies. There is a strong call, (if I may be allowed to use the medium of *reality of vision*, without having my *loyalty* impeached or my *affection* for the NOBLE COUNTRY to which I owe *my own education and my birth* called in question) there is, I say, evident to the thoughtful, a strong call

to be providing and preparing the men who shall represent our country with dignity in foreign Courts, and among the oldest and most polished nations of the world, and support her claim to the place which, I must be allowed to believe, *principally* through the *accidental circumstance* of her being in a great measure filled with people from old and developed nations, (a young country, so to speak, peopled at once with full grown minds) she has of late years taken, and established her present right to hold. Now, retired railway makers or railway speculators, retired merchants, or retired and fortunate gold finders, are not the men to legislate for A COUNTRY THAT WOULD BE A GREAT COUNTRY, or to administer her laws; they are not the men to heal the diseases of her people, be those diseases either of the body or the mind—we want *men devoting themselves to these high purposes and callings, and devoting themselves heart and soul to them from their youth.* Men who have been brought up in habits of business, are not ordinarily capable,—such is the power of custom and habituation—of turning their powers, at a period of life when they retire from business, to new pursuits, and those pursuits arduous and onerous. And they do not wish to do so. They have laboured:—they laboured for future ease and enjoyment. Their labour is now over, and they demand the opportunity for enjoyment in peace and quiet. The country which calls for men to do her work, and serve her public interests, wants *men fresh and vigorous*, and she wants them *able and prepared*—they must be competent to set about the work she has marked out for them with spirit, and to set about it with judgment in the right way: in a word she wants men of disciplined minds and of cultivated understandings. Look at such a man as Elihu Burritt, a man, I believe, of ordinary powers and standing at the commencement of life, now a man not merely of independence but of public importance. The interests of nations not long ago found and still find their advocate, (and no mean one) in him.* What made him the man he is?—What else but first,

*At the time when this was written, early in the year 1855, Mr. Burritt was corresponding, in England, with members of the Cabinet there, as well as those of his own country to procure the establishment of a better system and easier terms of correspondence between England and America. He is now in a like spirit, endeavouring to procure the emancipation of negroes in the neighbouring States.

decided character, and then mental culture (the two branches I have treated of in Education.) True, his was a remarkable course. He is a man in a thousand or in a million, a highly *self-educated man* (not that pet ideal of the age, a *self-made* man, but as opposed to a self-made, a *self-educated* man,) a man that won his way in the world, one may say, with a hammer in one hand and a book in the other, his time being divided equally between the two conflicting claims of business and of literature, or, one might almost say, of education. Yet he is an undeniable example of what I am speaking of—the certainty that *it is learning and character*, not wealth, nor station, *which makes a great man*. Were I myself now a young man, as full of ambition as young men often are, as I once was, had I the coolness to look around me calmly, and weigh my future destiny in the balance of probability, I should feel that there was open to my ambition in such a country as this, under its present circumstances, such a path of distinction as is rarely offered. I should devote myself to study—all kinds of study—but out of all, most to the study of man, whether of the living or the dead, the world around me, or the pages of history and philosophy; and I should count myself sure at no very late period of life of a career of high distinction,—I should feel that I might aspire to sway the interests, ere I had run my course, of this whole people. Not that such an end as this can be easily or readily attained; there is no short cut to it; it is here as in the case the poet describes,

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit *

Who, in Olympic games, would win the race,
Through hardships rude his youthful way must trace,
And sweating toil or shivering cold embrace.

There is need of patience, there is need of presevering diligence: the pathway to eminence *must* lie up hill, due preparation must be had, difficulties must be overcome, early disappointments must be put up with. The pleasant fruit must grow out from a bitter root,—the tree must be climbed before the fruit can be reached.

* Hor. De Art: Poet. l. 412.

Yet still I think this way to distinction is open. And with respect to what I may call fortune-seeking by steam (or to keep pace with the age, shall I say, by electricity?) the prediction may not be a popular one to make, but it may be an useful one for all that, that the opening which is thus afforded (especially to young men) to find remunerative employment at an unfairly early period, will in the end lead to disappointment. A man, to rise high in any profession, (except it be under the peculiar circumstances of a sudden great and urgent demand for services such as he can render, a demand which from its very nature cannot be lasting,) requires to have had a *good general education*. Under the most favorable circumstances, education will always be of importance, even to the adventurer: it will be to his advancement, what weight and bulk is to a body in motion. You may stop a hand car at a high speed, in a few minutes: but a train of cars, though the speed be no greater, must run on and on; it has in its own bulk a power of progress which the lighter machine has not. So it is with the man of general education, when he enters on a profession. He carries a weight which will force him ahead, and, if he have competitors, will enable him to leave them behind. Whilst then our railroads are built by English engineers, whilst the works they involve are great enough to call in amongst us men of first rate talent and standing from an old country, whilst those who are imported into the country to take the lead, are sure to bring with them dependents and followers, and whilst those who come out here to begin in these lesser situations are, as a rule, men of education of a higher stamp than those who enter the same profession in the country itself; we need not be surprised, if we hear of cases of disappointment, and in a few years meet with those who regret they had not kept steadily to their farms, or their professions, or their studies.

Insisting thus upon the importance of education, I may be asked (and very reasonably asked) *what sort of education it is which is thus important*. In answering the question I may be again obliged to go against popular opinion. It is *that kind of education which appears of least immediate importance*: it is that department of knowledge *which is sought*, if sought at all, *as an end, not as a*

means, it is that education whose aim is to develop the powers of the mind, not to prepare for a profession or to bring a speedy return of capital. It is quite true, that in a young country this idea of the immediate return of capital, as I have called it must, to a certain extent, enter into all our calculations; but that is a defect and a misfortune, and it must be borne in mind that it is so. The idea of *making education pay*, must have its weight; but it is an idea which should not find too cordial an entertainment: it should be a passing guest, not a set companion. Whilst then I quite concur in the opinion that there is no department of education which is not worth, (and well worth) cultivation, I should at the same time draw a line between the departments, and separate those which have the most direct and powerful effect in forming the mind, from those whose tendency to this end is less direct. It may be difficult thus to draw any exact line, and going through all the subjects of education dispose them so within these two departments that all should acquiesce in the division, and I should hardly hope to effect this; yet the same sort of difficulty besets us everywhere. We are, all our life long, engaged in drawing lines between what is good and bad, right and wrong, expedient or not expedient, pleasant or not pleasant; and there is, all along, the same difficulty in making classifications of subjects, which shall satisfy all. Yet we constantly make them and are obliged to make them.

First in the list, out of all, I should myself—regarding man as always in infancy in this world, and under schooling for another,—place such studies as would tend to make him acquainted with the nature of the DIVINE BEING, and the proofs of His moral government of the world, and His attributes, (as these subjects are taught both by Natural Religion and by Revelation.) He must understand also his own relation to that DIVINE BEING, both in the present and in a future life, and the dependence of his condition in the latter, upon the fulfilment of the conditions of his being in the present, and the elevation of his moral nature. Where this primary subject is made light of, I cannot but think that the highest of all subjects of education is neglected, and all the refinement which it gives, is only in the end so much vanity and vexation.

Of what concerns his present condition, and, as it would be said, "fits him for life," I should place first, *those subjects which tend to elevate him in his relation to his fellow men*, and give him a superiority over the uneducated or the less highly educated.

For this end, those studies are of primary importance, which give him a knowledge of man in his various relations in private life, and in public, as a complete and independent being, and as a member of various bodies. In this view, education must deal with men of all characters, in all countries, and in all ages. HISTORY, ancient and modern, therefore, (from such works as Macaulay, Alison, Grote, Gibbon, and a vast number of others down to mere biographies of individuals) must occupy a prominent place, and with history should be connected a certain portion of the study of Geography and Chronology as being its necessary and inseparable companions. MORAL PHILOSOPHY, and, as being the truest exponent of life and customs of the age it belongs to, the DRAMA, will form one very important head of study. Another, (and shall it yield in importance to the former?) will be the cultivation of his powers of reasoning; and here MATHEMATICS and LOGIC meet us with a claim to an early place in every scheme of education, and such a claim as will take no denial. And how shall we allow that branch of study to give place to any other, which has to deal with the powers of speaking and writing? Where are GRAMMAR, COMPOSITION, and RHETORIC to stand, if not in the front rank? Who has greater power or influence over his fellow men, who is more raised above them, than the well educated speaker? Who? There may be one other in these days—for there is a character, (may he pardon my opinion if he concur not in it,) who holds almost too powerful a position in these days—I mean the Editor! Perhaps some one may be disposed to quarrel with me for not having given even a higher place than I am giving by placing them here, to those studies which elevate the powers of imagination. POETRY on the one hand, (and as being the expression of poetry, the FINE ARTS,) and METAPHYSICS on the other, both of them studies of high intellectual character, and of great importance.

The study of LANGUAGE is one which should be as highly cul-

tivated as possible. In these days especially, when all the world is being continually more and more brought together, and it is impossible to say whom you may jostle in the street to-morrow, a Chinaman, a Bornese, a Russian, a Turk, or a New Zealander, (not to allude to such every day persons as a Frenchman, or a German, or Spaniard, or Italian,) this branch of study seems to have gained an increased importance, *although, we must always remember, no ordinary study of a language will impart much power of conversing in it.* It has, however, another infinitely higher source of importance, and having had it all along, will ever retain it: the almost incalculable advantage of enabling men to enter into the literature of other countries and compare together the *minds of nations* one with another: for the characters of nations are as varied and as peculiar as the idiosyncrasies of individuals. And here I must put in a plea for what is commonly known as CLASSICAL LITERATURE. It is becoming very sadly the fashion now a-days to enquire, what can be the use of LATIN and GREEK, except to turn man into a bookworm? I am sorry, very sorry, for the prevalence of this fancy. The age, I fear, will have to stand its trial on the charge of rash presumption, in slighting what has borne so well the test of time. The study of these languages offers one of the best *media* which can be attained, for disciplining the mind and developing its powers. It involves the study of the principles of language, of its structure, its power to express thoughts and represent ideas: and besides, the Latin and Greek contain the elements of so many languages, so many of the languages of nations which fill the most prominent places in civilized life, and European institutions and the European mind have grown so immediately out of, and are so confessedly built upon and influenced by the Roman, and the Roman again in so great measure by the Grecian, that to take away the study of these languages from our schools, were in a fair sense to take away the key of knowledge. Besides, in them we gain acquaintance with the sources of almost all branches of study. In those languages exist some of the ablest *Histories* that ever were written. The names of Thucydides, Herodotus, Tacitus, Livy, and others, have been known through hundreds—aye thousands—of

years: it remains to be seen yet, whether Macaulay, or Alison, or others, will share the like good fortune. I do not wish to particularize any of these names, nor do I mean to say that they will not; but who can be responsible for them that they will? And what *Philosophy* of human origin can surpass the Grecian? Our modern systems are almost all built upon that foundation, and that foundation is, as foundations are wont to be, of a far more solid character than the superstructure? We have alluded to the *Drama* and *Poetry*. That of classical ages will well bear to be laid side by side with any modern productions, when philosophically investigated. I am here, again, far from meaning to depreciate our own writers in this branch; nay, I think *they are generally not half enough studied*; but the ancients have this on their side, on a *prima facie* view of the case, that they made their compositions *tell* to a wonderful extent with much less aid from acting, and in general what may be called the "getting up" of their plays. It is recorded by Herodotus that the poet Phrynicus composed a play called the "taking of Miletus," and that the representation of it at Athens (which was in close friendship with Miletus) melted the audience to tears, and moved them so touchingly, that they fined Phrynicus for stirring up the memory of their calamities, and forbade him ever to exhibit the play again. What they wanted in effect they made up for by power of mental conception, and their striking aptness of expression. Have we again to deal with *Logic* and *Rhetoric*? We have to go back to Classical Literature to get at the source from which they have flowed down to us. We have to go back to Classical Literature, to understand the very terms which modern treatises, built upon them, employ. We have to go back to Classical Literature to correct mistakes into which modern writers have fallen from misconceiving them.

I trust I have said enough to vindicate in some measure the Classics from the oblivion into which many in the present day would cast them. I could say more, but I have already taxed your patience too long.

It might perhaps be expected that in accordance with the taste of the age one might add to the list of studies which are concern-

ed with man's relation to man, some little knowledge of **LAW** and **MEDICINE**: every man is, now a-days, to be his own lawyer and his own doctor. Certainly the principles of law and medicine are subjects we may profitably study; but when we go on to dabble in the practice of them, we had better take care. With the leave of the gentlemen of both Professions I would say, happy is the man who can keep out of their reach; but when we have need of law or medicine, it is undeniable that "a little learning is a dangerous thing," and we had better avail ourselves of the services of those who have drunk deep into the subjects, and not attempt to put our own crude notions into practice.

There are other branches of education with which I must deal somewhat summarily. Those which relate to the knowledge of the material world in which we live, and other similar bodies, and to the knowledge of the varieties of races of creatures with which our globe is stocked. I am far from denying much importance to such studies as **GEOLOGY**, **MINERALOGY**, **BOTANY**, or **NATURAL HISTORY**, but I cannot at all concede to them, in accordance with the spirit of the age, the first place. They are the more important, because when approached in a proper spirit, they are found to bear testimony as ample as it is constant, to the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator. The study of **ASTRONOMY** is calculated to produce the same excellent effect in a high degree. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handywork," and their voices are heard in all lands uttering His praise. **CHEMISTRY** is another of the studies, which is very important, bearing, as it does, upon the arts, the conveniences and comforts of life. Yet it is a subject for which I think sometimes too high a place is claimed; it is one, as it appears to me, which is to be followed not as an end, but as a means; and as a means, it leads not to the perfection of the higher powers of man, but rather to the gratification of those tastes, which are not peculiar to him, as the lord of the created world.

There is one other branch of study on which I must say a word, but only a word, before concluding; the study of **THE FINE ARTS**, **MUSIC**, **PAINTING**, **SCULPTURE** and the like. They are studies which are not generally esteemed or pursued *as studies*,

they are considered to belong to the refinement and polish, not the reality, of life. They are not therefore so generally important as some others. One of them, however, I should myself be inclined to move up to a higher class. Music is, I think, a refinement or accomplishment which is worthy of a higher place than it usually occupies in general estimation: it is often reckoned to be merely an ornament worthy only (or principally) of the weaker sex. I would not grudge them any right to it, which is not exclusive. But when we consider the power of music over the human mind, (a power which is almost universal, is natural, or implanted by the wisdom of the Infinite Mind, in all—the Savage no less than the refined and polished natives of the world—a power which is certainly very far greater than the power of any other of the fine arts,) I should be almost inclined to exalt Music to the side of Rhetoric, as one of the most powerful influences of the human mind. There is scarcely any one who has not felt its power himself, more or less. Look at the enthusiasm raised by the never wearying repetition of a national anthem—be it English, American, Austrian, Russian, or Spanish. Look at the wonderful power of such a strain as the well known Marseillaise hymn or *Mourir pour la Patrie* among the French, or the touching and inspiriting strains of Scotland, Ireland and Wales. There are two men of the last generation, whose names are cherished by all Englishmen, the clue to whose greatness was a quality peculiar (in their position) to those two and common to them both, stern sense of duty. I mean, of course, Wellington and Nelson. An Englishman's heart thrills as he thinks of the mounting of the flag to the mast head, which spoke forth the somewhat stern admonition, "England expects every man to do his duty." The name of Nelson is unknown to nobody; but there is another man whose name, now, is nearly unknown to everybody: whose death, a few years ago, was marked by circumstances of poverty and indigence: who passed from life unnoticed and almost unknown. Yet the fleets which won Nelson's victories, were cheered from day to day, their sailors were kept in a temper of happy contentedness, and their spirit of valour and conquest was roused by the songs and music of Dibdin. And if the command went home to the honest tar's heart to do

his duty, that heart was prepared and inspirited to execute the command by many such strains as this—

“Hearts of oak are our ships,
Jolly tars are our men,
We always are ready,
Steady boys, steady,
We'll fight and we'll conquer
Again and again.*

I have now pretty well discharged my promised task and, I trust, succeeded in exhibiting to you the subject of Education in some important lights. What has been said will have served, I hope, both to afford you an hour's amusement, and to call serious attention to some important and overlooked points, and also to enter a sort of indirect protest against the slight, which I conceive the age to be casting upon some of the principal departments of the subject of Education. I would bid you farewell in the capacity of lecturer, with the quotation from the speech of a celebrated Athenian orator Lysias, with which Aristotle closes his very powerful treatise on Rhetoric. “I have spoken, you have heard; remember ye, and judge.”

*I am not sure, by the way, that I am correct in ascribing this particular song to Dibdin.